

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 196830

CONAKRY FOR ASST. SEC. MOOSE

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PROG, SF, WA

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN CONCERNS AND SENSITIVITIES
REGARDING NAMIBIA
REFERENCE: PRETORIA 4478

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1. IN THE COURSE OF A COURTESY CALL AUGUST 3 BY
AF/S DIRECTOR KAISER ON SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR SOLE,
THE LATTER IMMEDIATELY RAISED THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE.
SOLE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM NEW YORK WHERE HE SAID
HE HAD READ THE MESSAGE WHICH ECKSTEEN HAD SENT TO
PRETORIA REPORTING HIS CONVERSATION WITH UN SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE AHTISAARI. ECKSTEEN HAD REPORTED

THAT AHTISAARI HAD TOLD HIM THAT FOLLOWING HIS ARRIVAL IN NAMIBIA WHEN HE MEETS WITH ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL STEYN NEXT WEEK HE INTENDS TO "QUESTION THE PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION OF VOTERS." SOLE WORRIEDLY STATED THAT SHOULD AHTISAARI IN FACT TELL STEYN THAT HE PLANS TO "QUESTION" THE PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WILL REACT VERY NEGATIVELY. SOLE ALLOWED THAT PERHAPS ECKSTEEN'S CABLE, WHICH WAS IN AFRIKAANS, MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN AN ACCURATE TRANSLATION OF THE ENGLISH WORD. SOLE THOUGHT THAT IF

AHTISAARI HAD INDICATED THAT HE INTENDED TO "REVIEW" THE PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION, THAT WOULD BE QUITE IN ORDER. THE POINT IS, SAID SOLE, THAT THE SAG EXPECTS AHTISAARI TO CONDUCT HIMSELF IN A CORRECT AND IMPARTIAL MANNER.

2. SOLE ALSO MENTIONED THAT HACKLES WERE BEING RAISED WITHIN THE SAG BY THE INCLUSION OF CERTAIN PEOPLE IN AHTISAARI'S SURVEY TEAM. HE MENTIONED IN PARTICULAR, ELIZABETH LANDIS, WHO HE SAID WAS WELL KNOWN FOR HER ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN BIAS. SOLE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE SURVEY TEAM MIGHT NOT APPRECIATE THE DELICACY OF THEIR MISSION AND THAT SOME MIGHT DELIBERATELY PROVOKE INCIDENTS.
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3. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEED TO BE SENSITIVE TO HEIGHTENED SAG'S SENSIBILITIES AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, SOLE CITED WHAT HE CLAIMED WAS A UN LEAK TO THE PRESS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE TWO-MAN ADVANCE PARTY WHICH HAD ARRIVED IN WINDHOEK AUGUST 2 HAD SUCCEEDED IN BOARDING THE SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS FLIGHT IN ZURICH ONLY BECAUSE SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS HAD BUMPED TWO PASSENGERS FROM AN ALREADY FULL FLIGHT. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE UN LEAK OF THIS STORY MAY HAVE BEEN WELL INTENTIONED, IT COULD HAVE AN UNDESIRABLE EFFECT ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC WHO MIGHT SEE THIS AS UNNECESSARY SAG GROVELING BEFORE THE UN.

4. SOLE DECLARED THAT THE SAG ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE BY DECEMBER 31, 1978. HE INSISTED (ALL WITH A STRAIGHT FACE) THAT THE SAG HAD MADE A COMMITMENT WHICH IT FELT OBLIGED TO HONOR--A COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA. WHILE ALLOWING THAT THE TIME-TABLE FOR VERY PRACTICAL REASONS HAS SLIPPED, THE

SAG NEVERTHELESS FELT THAT IT HAD TO STICK TO THAT ORIGINAL DATE UNLESS THE UN COULD CONVINCE THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA THAT FOR REAL AND PRACTICAL REASONS ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE DELAYED SEVERAL MONTHS.

5. IN REVIEWING THE FINAL DEVELOPMENTS LEADING TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION ON NAMIBIA, SOLE ASSERTED THAT IN THE SAG'S EYES THE US HAD "RENEGED" ON WALVIS BAY. HE SAID THAT WHILE IT WAS NOT IN

THE AGREEMENT, THE SAG HAD UNDERSTOOD FROM ITS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE USG THAT THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED IN TANDEM WITH THE PRINCIPAL RESOLUTION ON NAMIBIA. AS A CONSEQUENCE, HE SAID
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THERE IS GROWING MISTRUST OF THE USG IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CABINET WHICH COULD AFFECT OTHER ISSUES, INCLUDING THE INTERNAL SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL SITUATION.

6. IF THE US IS, AS SOLE SAID HE BELIEVES, INTERESTED IN A PEACEFUL EVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE US SHOULD DO WHAT IT CAN TO BOLSTER AND NOT UNDERMINE THE POSITION OF FOREIGN MINISTER PIK BOTHA. RECENT EVENTS LIKE THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE ARE SERVING TO STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF ANDRIES TREURNICHT, THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION, WHO REPRESENTS THE MOST VERKRAMPTE IN THE CABINET, AND TO WEAKEN PIK BOTHA.

7. SOLE'S COMMENTS WERE IN THE CONTEXT OF "STRAIGHTFORWARD, DIRECT TALK," AS HE PUT IT. HE PREFACED A NUMBER OF HIS COMMENTS WITH SUCH STATEMENTS AS "MY GUT FEELING," "I THINK," ETC., BUT HE WAS MOST SERIOUS WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT THE EXTREMELY DELICATE ROLE THAT AHTISAARI WOULD HAVE TO PLAY IF THE UN MISSION WERE TO SUCCEED. VANCE

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